

refused to allow a vote or even give the bill a hearing.

I'll keep pushing for this idea next year, because it saves money for us all and helps people get the medicines they need to stay healthy and alive.

Cutting red tape

For every dollar you pay for health care, 30 cents gets eaten by red tape and administrative costs. If you have health coverage from an HMO, you know how many trees get sacrificed to all the paperwork when you visit the doctor.

Doctors hate it more than anybody, because they're spending more and more time wrestling with red tape instead of taking care of patients. It drives up their costs, too, with many doctors paying full-time staffers just to handle paperwork from all the different insurance companies and HMOs, plus Medicare and Medicaid.

If we're going to make health care more affordable, we need to take a machete to all this red tape.

What do you think?

It helps me continue representing our district well when I hear from the folks I represent. Tell me your family's story, your ideas or any comments you have about the issues facing our state.



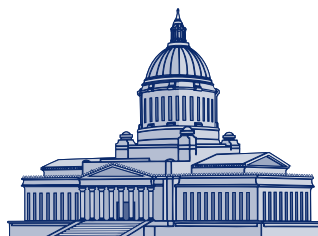
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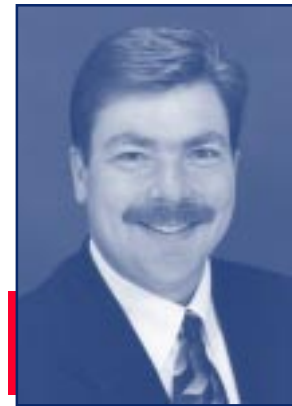


2004 Session Review



PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Representative
Geoff Simpson



Representative
Geoff
Simpson



2004 Session Review

Dear neighbors,

It's a pleasure being back home in Covington and at my job as a firefighter, because people speak in plain English about real issues — schools, jobs, health care — instead of the bureaucratese they speak in Olympia.

The people I talk to say our state needs bold ideas and strong reforms to make this a better place to live, work and raise a family.

Inside this newsletter is a quick look at what the Legislature did — and didn't do — this session. I'll also tell you about some of the questions we're facing:

- How can we improve our local schools?
- Will our kids get turned away because there isn't enough space at our universities?
- What can we do to stop American jobs from being shipped overseas?
- Which tax loopholes should be closed?
- Should we save taxpayer money by buying prescription medicines from Canada?

Many of you will want more information about specific issues, and I encourage you to contact me anytime by e-mail, telephone or letter.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your representative. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Rep. Geoff Simpson

**Keeping
In
Touch**

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Education

Fairness for our schools

If you support local schools, you know how tough it is to pass levies. That's because schools need a supermajority — 60 percent — instead of the simple majority of 50 percent to elect somebody or pass an initiative.

Any politician who got 59.9 percent of the vote would call it a landslide and a mandate. So why is 59.9 percent a landslide for politicians but a failure for your local school?

I voted to change the law so school levies could pass with 50 percent. I think it's undemocratic when 41 people out of 100 get to decide whether we improve our schools or not.

The bill died in the Senate, where they didn't allow a vote.

Building new schools and colleges

Every parent and grandparent wants the children in their family to get a great education.

In the year 2008, the biggest graduating class in state history will come out of high school and those students will come knocking at UW, WSU and WWU — but 33,000 students will get turned away for lack of space.

We should be building more schools and colleges to reduce overcrowding. Too many of our kids are crammed into hallways and trailers instead of real classrooms.

I believe it's wrong to tell an entire generation of kids they can't earn a college degree, the surest ticket to the American Dream.

This year, I voted to fund our universities so they could add space for 3,000 more college students. I also voted for a state construction budget to build more labs and lecture halls at our universities and at our local community colleges.



Jobs

Stop shipping jobs overseas

Should your tax dollars subsidize American jobs getting shipped overseas?

Of course not. But that's what happens today.

Today, it's not just factory workers who are worrying about getting laid off because the company moves overseas.

Professional workers — computer programmers, accountants, you name it — are now becoming unemployed because big companies are worried more about boosting stock prices than remaining loyal to the hardworking Americans who made their company great.

To help save those jobs and help those families, we need answers. We need to know the truth about companies getting contracts with the state of Washington — are they hiring people here at home or sending our tax dollars to create jobs an ocean or two away?

I want to protect workers in Washington state from getting chewed up in a race to the bottom, a downward spiral of companies shopping the world for the cheapest labor, the fewest health and safety protections, the longest work week, the fewest days off and the weakest protections against pollution.

And we need to protect all the small businesses in this state — most of these are owned and run by families. How can they compete with places that pay workers 30 cents an hour?

I believe citizens deserve the truth about how the state spends taxpayer money.

I voted for a reform to stop using your taxpayer money to ship American jobs overseas. That reform passed the House, but powerful special interests killed the bill in the Senate.



Accountability for tax breaks

Create new jobs — that's what tax breaks are supposed to do. But how do we know if they work?

Tax breaks in Washington add up to more than \$30 billion in lost state, county and city revenue per year. Those dollars could fund schools, police and fire departments, courts and jails, parks and public works.

Who picks-up the tab for these tax giveaways? You do. One reason your property taxes are so high is those corporate tax breaks passed by the legislature.

We should be able to see which tax breaks are actually creating jobs and which companies are simply taking the money to boost profits without creating new jobs here, or only creating low-paying jobs without health care coverage.

It's easy for a politician to vote for a corporate tax break, but once it's on the books, you can't get it off. That's why we have more than 500 tax exemptions — some of them so old, obscure and obsolete nobody remembers why they're there.

Tax breaks like the one for the sale of bull semen which costs \$600,000 annually, or the more than \$3 million the state loses each year from the tax exemption on precious metal sales.

I have always supported independent performance audits of state government operations. We need performance audits of our state's tax loopholes. It's a common sense reform to make sure taxpayers are getting the most for their money.

Health care

Buying medicine from Canada

It's outrageous that the research and development of new drugs is subsidized by American tax dollars and in return, pharmaceutical companies are gouging us while giving folks in Canada and Europe a fat discount. Americans pay more for prescription drugs than any country on earth.

If you could buy the same product for \$2 instead of \$10, would you do it? Of course. It's the free market. So why isn't there a free market when it comes to prescription medicines for our seniors, kids and working families?

The state of Washington spent about one billion dollars on prescription drugs last year for employees, prisoners and residents of state hospitals. Those are your tax dollars.

If we bought our prescription medicines from Canada, we'd save 30 to 80 percent. Taxpayers could save at least \$300 million a year.

That's why I introduced a bill to buy prescription medicines from Canada. The House of Representatives passed my reform legislation. Senate Republicans

